Chanting of Vedic Mantras in American Senate

†510. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government of India are aware that the meeting which was held on 12th July, 2007 in American Senate, commenced with the chanting of Vedic Mantras and this was the first incident of its kind in American history;

(b) whether this day was the most glorious and happiest day for the entire country as Rigveda, Upnishada and excerpts from Gita were chanted as a prayer in American Senate; and

(c) whether Government of India could also select a day in Parliament when the mantras of our thousand years old glorious granthas would be chanted in Parliament, although these shlokas have been written on the walls of Parliament House?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) to (c) Government of India have seen reports indicating that a ceremony that included chanting of Vedic mantras took place in the US Senate on July 12, 2007.

Delays in getting passports

511. SHRI A. VIJAYA RAGHAVAN: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Competent Authority had initiated any action on the applications submitted by Democratic Youth Federation of India during the month of June, 2007 on the delay to get new passport and the imminent corruption associated with above delay in the Regional Passport Office at Malappuram district headquarter, Kerala;

(b) if so, the action taken thereon; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) and (c) No. The Ministry did not receive an application from Democratic Youth Federation of India during the month of June, 2007 on the delay to get new passport and the imminent corruption associated with above delay in the Regional Passport Office at Malappuram district headquarter, Kerala. However, the Ministry is aware of some delays in the issue of passports at the Passport Office, Malappuram mainly due to shortage of staff, which has been rectified now. No specific instance of corruption has come to the notice of the Ministry at the Passport Office, Malappuram.

Discussion with Government of Indonesia

512. SHRI RAJEEV CHANDRASEKHAR: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the topics discussed between Governments of India and Indonesia during his visit to that country early this year;

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.